

2021 Baltimore County Redistricting Commission

Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2021 Meeting

This was the fourth meeting of the Commission, not including public input hearings. In order to have an interactive view of the redistricting tools, the meeting was held in person in the Council Chamber. The meeting was also live-streamed and started at 1:00 p.m. All Commission members were present during the entire meeting, with Sophia Montgomery attending via web conference. Also in attendance were Commission staff members Tom Bostwick, Adam Phillips, as well as members of the GIS team assisting the Commission.

Council Secretary Tom Bostwick greeted the Commission members and gave opening remarks. The Commission was presented with a booklet containing all the written public testimony as well as a summary of the population figures for the current council districts. Mr. Bostwick explained that the GIS team had taken the changes suggested by each Commission member individually using their redistricting web app and combined them into a single map for discussion.

Mr. Latshaw suggested moving precinct 9-018 to District 6 and moving precincts 11-013, 11-025, and 11-027 to District 5. The Commission agreed to move 9-018 to District 6. However, upon finding out that precincts 11-027 and 11-025 had less than 100 people, Mr. Latshaw asked for suggestions to balance the populations of District 5 and 6. Mr. Almon suggested moving precinct 14-002 to District 6. Mr. Latshaw suggested that the Commission also move precinct 15-005 to District 5.

The Commission agreed to Mr. Almon and Mr. Latshaw's suggestions and then reviewed these changes for their effect on district populations. Mr. Neuberger commented that the precincts often seem to split neighborhoods and communities and suggested that future reconfigurations of precincts should consider community boundaries. In order avoid splitting neighborhoods, Mr. Neuberger suggested moving the section of precinct 15-004 north of Middle River Road to District 5 and moving the portion of precinct 15-005 south of Martin Boulevard to District 6. Mr. Latshaw agreed and in the same spirit, suggested moving the portion of precinct 11-025 north of White Marsh Boulevard to District 5.

The Commission then reviewed these changes and found that the population of District 5 was too high. The Commission briefly discussed moving precinct 15-024 from District 5 to District 7, but ultimately found this unworkable due to the population size.

The Commission reviewed these changes and then reviewed certain written testimony to see if the public requests were met. Mr. Plymouth mentioned that it was good to work with Sheila Lewis regarding the border of Districts 2 and 4 regarding the Villa Nova and Liberty Road areas. Mr. Neuberger agreed that the change suggested by Ms. Lewis and Mr. Plymouth in his individual map were a good idea. Mr. Bostwick then summarized the changes the Commission made at the meeting.

Mr. Plymouth moved for the Commission to adopt the map and Ms. Montgomery seconded. During discussion of the motion Mr. Almon requested that the Commission take an additional week to consider the changes made and consider additional changes to achieve more equal population among the districts. Mr. Plymouth commented that an ideal population distribution is unlikely. Mr. Bostwick, in summarizing the populations, commented that the current map is within the five percent that the Redistricting Manual requires.

Mr. Neuberger agreed with Mr. Almon that there is value in taking some time to consider these changes, especially since the Charter mandated deadline for the Commission to give its report is more than two weeks away. To address the desire to reduce District 5's population and increase District 3's population, Mr. Neuberger suggested moving the portion of precinct 09-026 below I-695 to District 6 and moving the remainder of precinct 09-026 to District 3. The Commission agreed to these changes. Mr. Neuberger commented that, after that change, the outliers in terms of population are now Districts 1 and 7, which are geographically locked and therefore very difficult to create ideal district populations.

Mr. Latshaw agreed with Mr. Almon's interest in giving more time to consider the map. In deference to Mr. Almon and Mr. Neuberger request, Mr. Plymouth agreed to give some additional time to consider the changes and withdrew his motion to adopt the map. The Commission then agreed to hold the final vote on the map and recommendations at the next Commission meeting. Mr. Bostwick and Mr. Almon discussed the fact that the map the Commission gives to the Council is a recommendation and the Council is not required to adhere to the Commission's recommendations. Mr. Latshaw thanked the members and closed the meeting at approximately 2:15 p.m.